

ICWA BOARD OF NURSING

In RE: Petition for)	Declaratory Ruling No. 65
Declaratory Ruling Filed By:)	
Judy Anglen, R.N.)	RN Delegation to a Certified
July 25, 1994)	Medication Aide the Applica-
)	tion of Oxygen in a Non-
)	crisis Situation to An Adult
)	Male With a Congenital Heart
)	Defect Residing in an Inter-
)	mediate Care Facility

A petition for a declaratory ruling was filed with the Iowa Board of Nursing by Judy Anglen, R.N., Health Care Supervisor, Area IV., Glenwood State Hospital-School, Glenwood, Iowa, on July 25, 1994.

The Board is authorized to issue declaratory rulings "as to the applicability of any statutory provision, rule, or other written statement of law or policy, decision, or order of the agency" pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.9 (1993). See also 655 IAC 9.

The question presented in the petition is:

May a registered nurse employed by Glenwood State Hospital-School in Glenwood, Iowa, delegate to a certified medication aide, the application of oxygen in a non-crisis situation to a twenty-nine-year-old male with a congenital heart defect?

The facts leading to this case are as follows:

The Glenwood State Hospital-School is an intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded.

The client is a twenty-nine-year-old male who receives continuous oxygen therapy due to a congenital heart defect. This defect is not correctable through surgery or medication therapy.

The client is capable of living in a cottage with people in his own age bracket when he receives oxygen. This more home-like environment provides him with greater stimulation, more opportunities to learn, and increased participation in recreational activities. This environment also allows him to have more privacy as well as a bedroom of his own and subsequently a place to collect personal belongings. The client is a long-term resident of the facility. He has a deteriorating condition. Previously, he was able to be without oxygen therapy for long periods of time which allowed him to attend school and work activities. He came into the clinic for a two hour period for oxygen therapy. Now, he requires constant oxygen therapy. The facility encounters a problem when the client must be switched to a portable tank to travel to school and work. The facility employs a registered nurse twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week, but her duties do not permit her to be available to switch the systems over each time it is necessary. If delegation of the procedure is not allowed, the client will have to reside in the infirmary unit solely because it is staffed by a nurse twenty-four hours a day who can administer the required oxygen. Thus, the client would be denied many of the aforementioned opportunities. The client's parents concur with the request that delegation be permitted.

Additional facts are as follows:

This ruling is similar to Declaratory Ruling #54, in which the RN was permitted to delegate oxygen administration to a

medication manager in an intermediate care facility.

The nursing staff at Glenwood State Hospital-School recognizes the fact that oxygen administration is a task which requires the knowledge and skills attributed to nurses. However, it is the belief of the staff at Glenwood State Hospital-School that with close supervision by the licensed nursing staff and the guidelines provided in this ruling, that the task can be delegated to the certified medication aide. Oxygen would be administered at a previously determined level, not greater than five liters per minute, per physician's order. The method of delivery would be a concentrator or portable tank with nasal prongs. Application or adjustment of oxygen based on symptoms or oximeter readings would be performed only by a licensed nurse or a respiratory therapist. Any symptoms of decreased oxygenation would be immediately reported to a nurse and acted upon by the nurse. The activities of the certified medication aide in this regard would be limited to the mechanical aspects of turning on the equipment, setting the dial at a predetermined rate, and turning off the equipment.

Rationale:

The Iowa Board of Nursing considers the administration of oxygen to be a nursing function requiring the knowledge and skills attributed to nurses. Oxygen is a drug and can cause serious side effects. Changes in the respiratory status of a client requires the assessment skills attributed to nurses. The

nurse responsible for oxygen therapy must know about the hazards of oxygen therapy as well as the clinical indications of complications related to oxygen therapy. However, due to the facts presented in this case, a registered nurse employed by Glenwood State Hospital-School in Glenwood, Iowa, may delegate to a certified medication aide, the application of oxygen in a non-crisis situation to a twenty-nine-year-old-male with a congenital heart defect, provided that:

1. There is a written physician's order for an established rate of oxygen which is not greater than 5 liters per minute;

2. The institution has a written policy indicating that the delegation of the tasks, under the guidelines herein, is allowable;

3. The registered nurse assesses the client regarding respiratory status and the overall condition of the client, as needed;

4. The registered nurse provides for the certified medication aide, inservice education to include proper operation of the oxygen delivery systems, symptoms of inadequate oxygen saturations, side effects of oxygen supplementation, and care of equipment; the nurse observes the successful demonstration of the task by the certified medication aide, and documentation thereof is contained in the personnel file of the certified medication aide;

5. The registered nurse observes the certified medication

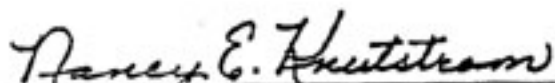
aide assisting the client at least one time on a quarterly basis to assess skills;

6. The registered nurse provides for annual review of the procedure, and documentation thereof is contained in the personnel file of the certified medication aide;

7. The registered nurse establishes protocol for the certified medication aide in regard to the frequency of the performance of visual checks of the flow meter regulator and the client; and

8. Any symptoms of decreased oxygenation will be immediately reported to the nurse and acted upon by the nurse.

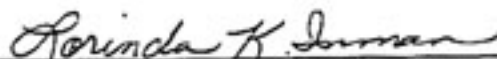
The registered nurse shall retain accountability for actions that are delegated. Application or adjustments of oxygen based on symptoms or oximeter readings remains within the scope of practice of the licensed nurse.



Nancy E. Khutstrom, R.N., M.S., Ed.
Chairperson
Iowa Board of Nursing

September 22, 1994

Date



Lorinda K. Inman, R.N., M.S.N.
Executive Director
Iowa Board of Nursing

September 22, 1994

Date